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CIA Had 'Contact' With Ex-Agent Linked to Libya

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DENVER—Edwin P. Wilson, the former CIA operative accused of supplying arms and terrorist training for Libyan ruler Moammar Kadafi, had "operational" contact with the intelligence agency at the time of his allegedly illegal activities, according to a CIA official's court testimony.

The official, George L. Marling, testified that the agency's records show that the CIA's last contact with Wilson "for an operation, was in September of 1976"—five months after a federal indictment alleges that Wilson began supplying Libya with explosives and personnel for a terrorist training project.

Plot to Kill Dissident

It was also in September, 1976, that Wilson and Frank Terpil, another former CIA operative under indictment, allegedly plotted to murder a Libyan dissident living in Egypt.

When asked to comment on Marling's testimony about Wilson, now an international fugitive, a CIA spokesman Wednesday refused to elaborate on the agency's September, 1976, contact with Wilson. The spokesman refused to say whether the contact was official or part of what the agency has described as unofficial activities between Wilson and individuals at the CIA. Two CIA employees have been fired for engaging in improper activities with Wilson.

The spokesman repeated an earlier denial of an involvement by the

agency in the illegal activities attributed to Wilson.

Marling testified in the case of Eugene Tafoya, a former Green Beret standing trial for attempted murder in Fort Collins, Colo., in the shooting of a Libyan dissident. Tafoya, who testified that he had thought he was working for the CIA at the time of the shooting, has been linked to Wilson.

The prosecution contends that Tafoya, of Truth or Consequences, N.M., was a paid Libyan hit man sent to kill Faisal Zagallai, an active and vocal opponent of Kadafi in the United States. Zagallai was shot in the head twice on Oct. 14, 1980, while struggling with Tafoya in Zagallai's living room.

Telephone Conversations

Tafoya testified that he went to Zagallai's apartment to deliver a message from the CIA that Zagallai should curb his political activities. Tafoya contends that he shot Zagallai in self-defense after Zagallai pulled a gun he had been authorized to carry because the FBI had warned him that his name was on an international hit list of Kadafi opponents.

The jury in the Tafoya trial began its deliberations Wednesday after hearing five weeks of testimony. During the trial, the jury heard telephone recordings, apparently deadly serious, of Tafoya asking another former Green Beret, "Do you know anybody that should quit breathing permanently?"